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“Speaking Of Science” Program Brings Experts To The Classroom

Youngsville, LA - College faculty are drumming up excitement at schools across the state about science and technology by creatively sharing information on subjects like dinosaurs, space exploration and microscopic life. Recently, more than 500 students at Green T. Lindon Elementary School in Youngsville, just outside Lafayette, were treated to a thought-provoking series of up-close and, in some cases, *hands-on* science presentations as part of the “Speaking of Science” (SOS) program, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Board of Regents’ Louisiana Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Speaking of Science is aimed at exposing elementary and secondary school students statewide to Louisiana’s finest scientific minds and, in the process, encouraging Louisiana’s future leaders to consider careers in science and engineering. The

program offers age-appropriate presentations on subjects ranging from astronomy and medicine to mathematics and computers given by leading university researchers and lecturers in their respective scientific disciplines.

“The goals of Speaking of Science are to spark student interest in the science and engineering professions, to increase awareness of the excellent research going on at Louisiana’s universities, and to showcase the state’s leading scientists,” said Louisiana Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Savoie. “The program now has about fifty professors across the state associated with the program, representing just about every area of scientific research and engineering.”

The SOS presentations at Lindon Elementary were part of that school’s annual Math and Science Expo. University of Louisiana at Lafayette Professor Dr. Gary Glass brought in a powerful microscope to complement his presentation entitled “Using Atoms To See The Invisible/Powers of Ten.” Dr. Roy Dokka of LSU in Baton Rouge used slides of satellite imagery to illustrate his presentation “Watching The Loss of Louisiana’s Coast From Space.” ULL geologist Dr. Gary Kinsland shared some of the results of his world-renowned research in Mexico’s Yucatan to help students understand a widely-accepted theory on the demise of the dinosaurs in his presentation, “Chicxulub: Impact on Dinosaurs, The Earth, and Civilization.”

“Speaking of Science offers an excellent opportunity for university researchers to share the wonders of scientific inquiry with young people,” said Kinsland. “And it’s a lot of fun.”

Not surprisingly, the responses of Lindon Elementary students and faculty alike to the presentations and to the SOS program in general were enthusiastically positive.

“SOS provides the kids with a new aspect of these subjects. It’s no longer just words out of a textbook. Hands-on experiences like working with a microscope and slides stick with them into adulthood,” said second grade teacher Cindy Fontenot, who coordinates the school’s annual Math and Science Expo. “And SOS is so convenient. With just one phone call I was able to access an entire spectrum of speakers and subjects.”

For more information on Speaking of Science, contact the Louisiana Board of Regents at (225)

342-4253, or visit the Regents website at www.regents.state.la.us.